

Method and Apparatus for Monitoring Multiple Electronic Mail Systems

ABSTRACT

A method for monitoring multiple electronic mail systems includes the steps of:
5 a) configuring an e-mail system polling process on a user's machine; b) polling a number of e-mail systems from the user's machine; c) retrieving data from the e-mail systems concerning mail intended for the user; and d) storing the data on the user's machine in a format that permits the storage and retrieval of data pertaining to the plurality of e-mail systems. The polling can be accomplished in the background while the user is performing other tasks on the computer system.

10 An apparatus for monitoring multiple electronic mail systems includes a digital processor, read/write memory coupled to the digital processor, and at least one external communication channel coupled to the digital processor permitting the digital processor to communicate with a plurality of external electronic mail systems. A poller of the apparatus is operative to generate inquiries over the communication channel to the plurality of electronic mail systems, a data
15 retriever is operative to receive data concerning mail intended for a designated user, and a data handler is operative to store and retrieve data concerning the mail for the designated user. An article of manufacture of the present invention includes the poller, data retriever, and data handler stored in a machine-readable storage medium.

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